

VZCZCXRO4527  
RR RUEHPA  
DE RUEHOS #0621/01 2541005  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
R 111005Z SEP 07  
FM AMCONSUL LAGOS  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9399  
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE  
RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA 9175  
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO 0119  
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH AFB UK  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC  
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC  
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC  
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 000621

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/W, INR/AA, DS/IP/AF, DS/ICI/PII, DS/DSS/OSAC  
OSLO FOR HELENA SCHRADER  
DOE FOR GPERSON, CAROLYN GAY  
TREASURY FOR ASEVERENS, SRENENDER, DFIELDS  
COMMERCE FOR KBURRESS  
STATE PASS USTR FOR ASST USTR FLISER  
STATE PASS TRANSPORTATION FOR MARAD  
STATE PASS OPIC FOR ZHAN AND MSTUCKART  
STATE PASS TDA FOR NCABOT  
STATE PASS EXIM FOR JRICHTER  
STATE PASS USAID FOR GWEYNAND AND SLAWAETZ

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/10/2017

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: NIGER DELTA NGOS WARN FG ON IJAW FOCUS; CARMEN  
GROUP ALUMNUS TO BUILD HOUSES IN DELTA STATE

REF: A. LAGOS 514

[1](#)B. LAGOS 502

[1](#)C. 06 LAGOS 1076

Classified By: Acting Consul General Donald McConnell for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: While Niger Delta militants have been in dialogue with the Federal and state governments, non-violent and non-Ijaw groups said they feel left out and have threatened to turn to violence to make their voices heard. In Delta State, a U.S. company leads a private-public venture interested in building housing developments, offering home mortgages, and creating employment opportunities; the success of this venture may be an indicator of Governor Uduaghan's interest in actualizing his three-point agenda. Delta State militant leader Tom Polo recently told the American investor he would welcome development in the state if it created employment opportunities for riverine inhabitants. End Summary.

-----  
Failure to Include Non-Ijaws in Talks  
Stirs Unrest in Rivers State  
-----

[1](#)2. (C) Non-Ijaw and non-violent minority ethnicities are smarting at being overlooked and complaining bitterly about their disenfranchisement. Meetings between the Federal Government and militants have primarily engaged Ijaw indigenes from Delta and Bayelsa states (Refs A and B). According to Legborsi Pyagbara with QMovement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), the Ogoni in Rivers State have long practiced non-violence, but Ogoni youths are now considering the use of arms to effect change. If government fails to include non-militant Ijaw communities in

negotiations, which our interlocutors believe would result in profitable appointments or allocations of funds, there may be a rise in unrest among heretofore peaceful communities.

13. (C) The Rivers State-based Niger Delta Civil Society Coalition (NDCSC), which is composed of human rights, environmental and ethnic groups, warned the diplomatic community of a "pending crisis" in the Niger Delta. This warning was issued in early August after violence in Port Harcourt, Rivers State erupted. The NDCSC accused the GON of engaging in "ethnically partisan" dialogue which could marginalize non-Ijaw and non-violent groups.

14. (C) The Coalition also warned that the government's failure to reign in politically-backed criminals would lead to increased violence and therefore called for credible local government elections. NDCSC revealed that at least two politically influential individuals in the region have known cultist ties and experience: the current Secretary to Rivers State Government, Gabriel Pidomson (formerly a cultist at the University of Science and Technology, Port Harcourt), and "Famous" in Bayelsa State, who was purportedly active in former Governor Jonathan's Administration.

15. (C) However, the NDCSC did not think it was too late to reclaim the Niger Delta. Among its prescriptions was a call for the international community to pressure the GON into a transparent and accountable use of funds. The GON would then pressure state governments to do the same. The NDCSC warned that if the Niger Delta was not seriously addressed, communities, militants and youths would be forced to conclude that violence is the only way to become relevant and gain wealth, and to act on that conviction.

LAGOS 00000621 002.2 OF 002

-----  
U.S. Firm to Build Houses in Delta State  
-----

16. (C) Mike Williams, Chairman of TransAtlantic Integrated and Carmen Group alumnus, is working with the Delta State Oil Producing Areas Development Commission (DESOPADEC) to provide long-term mortgages and housing in Delta State. Local banks would originate the loans, Williams told Poloff in late August, which TransAtlantic would sell to American institutions. DESOPADEC would help acquire land and settle community issues, and has purportedly agreed to invest 25 to 30 percent of its resources in this project. DESOPADEC's monthly income is approximately USD 24 million (Ref B). TransAtlantic plans to build three to four planned community developments, each of which will contain 3,000-5,000 housing units, offer water supply, sanitation, power generation, and roadways. Williams expected each ethnic group in the area, Ijaw, Itsekiri, Isoko and Urhobo, to want their own estate.

17. (C) Williams told Poloff DESOPADEC Chairman Chief Wellington Okrika had facilitated discussions with Tom Polo and other militants while Williams was in Warri, Delta State and that he felt perfectly safe because of these individuals' intense interest in development. Polo told Williams he would support housing developments in the area if they produced employment opportunities for the region's inhabitants.

18. (C) Delta State Governor Uduaghan thought highly of the project, Williams said, and asked to approve the TransAtlantic-DESOPADEC agreement. Williams expected the Governor to streamline the contract and make it ready for signing by September. Williams told Poloff the vacant Warri hospital has been donated for use as the "Delta State Institute of Housing Technology," where Deltans will be trained to build community developments. Williams estimated there was enough demand for at least 50,000 housing units throughout the Niger Delta and was confident those trained at the Institute would remain employed.

¶9. (C) Whether this private-public project in Delta State will succeed remains to be seen; government and DESOPADEC commitment will remain the determining factors. Williams recently left the Carmen Group, where as an African specialist he worked closely with Bayelsa State Governor Goodluck Jonathan and other government officials to develop projects under the Bayelsa Partnership Initiative (Ref C). Once Jonathan was nominated to run for the Vice Presidency on the People's Democratic Party ticket, Williams complained, he let Bayelsa's development projects fall by the way side. One abandoned project was to provide pre-fabricated low-income housing to civil servants; this Bayelsa project convinced Williams something similar could be replicated in Delta State. Another abandoned project was to send 200 Bayelsan students to historically black colleges and universities, such as Howard and Tuskegee Universities, in 2007.

-----  
Comment  
-----

¶10. (C) Non-Ijaw communities make an important point: all Niger Delta indigenes should have a stake in the Niger Delta's future and a place at the table where the Niger Delta's problems are resolved. Tellingly, Amcit Williams, who brought with him a hope of employment and development for Delta State, walked among the Delta State militants with impunity. End Comment.  
MCCONNELL